



Carlos Leon is a native El Pasoan, a 29-year veteran and a 5th year chief of the El Paso Police Department, having served in the rank of Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief. Chief Leon has served in almost every aspect of the Department during his tenure, including narcotics, internal affairs and was instrumental in the implementation of community policing while Commander of Pebble Hills, the first regional command center. As Deputy Chief, he directed the regional operations of the department and served as the Administrative Services Bureau Assistant Chief overseeing Communications, Planning & Research, Records, Financial Services, Grant Management and MIS.

As Chief of Police, he manages the department's budget that has grown to \$92 million. Through his leadership, grant funding in the

amount of \$30 million has been acquired, enabling the Department to hire 150 additional officers and to implement programs to assist victims of domestic violence. He is also credited with the redeployment of police officers by creating civilian positions to support police functions.

Under Chief Leon's guidance the department has won several awards, the Community Policing Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Crime Prevention Council has named the City of El Paso as one of the six safer cities in the United States. The Christian Science Monitor recognized El Paso as the major U.S. city with the lowest homicide rate. For the 6th consecutive year, El Paso was selected the third-safest city among cities with a population exceeding 500,000 by the Morgan Quitno Research Company.

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Federal Funding

Recent distributions of Federal funds were focused primarily on locations that have high threat level profiles with critical infrastructures. Although these locations justifiably need Federal assistance, these factors should not be the sole criteria for the distribution of Federal funds. Two other issues deserve equal consideration.

First, El Paso is the largest city between Dallas, Texas and Phoenix, Arizona and is a stand-alone community that is constantly called upon to provide assistance to surrounding communities and counties. Unlike the larger metropolitan areas that have the resources of several communities to draw upon, El Paso must be able to respond to crisis incidents without support from other communities. El Paso is the largest city situated on the US/Mexico border and encompasses an area of over 1,000 square miles. Additional funding should be directed to agencies that support large geographical regions.

Second, funding should also focus on projects and programs that prevent terrorists from entering our country. Border communities are especially vulnerable to possible acts of terrorism. El Paso has long been known as a corridor into the United States for illegal drugs and undocumented immigrants. An additional risk factor is presented by a sophisticated underground tunneling system originally designed for civil defense and/or flood control. A proactive approach should be utilized in apprehending terrorists at the border. Additional funding must be directed to enhance border security.

Improve Ability to Prevent and Defend Against Future Attacks

Information sharing that is timely and accurate is the single most important factor in preventing and defending against future attacks. The Federal government has the intelligence resources to acquire this information however, due to security concerns, information is not provided to local public safety agencies. Restrictions on information sharing among law enforcement agencies need to be lessened through federal legislation.

An effective program is critical for securing our borders. Local law enforcement should be empowered to assist other agencies in the search for those who are in our country and represent a terrorist risk.

DEDICATED TO SERVE

What is the impact of paying overtime and staffing for increased security needs?

When threat condition levels are heightened the costs can easily deplete the budget of most departments. In order to limit overtime costs, the El Paso Police Department utilizes on-duty personnel to provide extra security at high threat locations. This diminishes the Police Department's ability to provide normal services. For instance during threat level orange, the El Paso Police Department spent an additional \$39,000 per week to provide adequate police protective measures. Federal funds should be made available to provide for the additional expenses generated to secure high threat locations.

Local agencies should be reimbursed for expenses when responding to incidents occurring at Federal facilities. For example, the El Paso Police Department routinely provides law enforcement support for perimeter control, canine units for explosive detection and Bomb Squad services at the United States/Mexico Ports of Entry. Local law enforcement should be reimbursed for the costs of providing these services.